

Meeting Summary

US 29 North Corridor Advisory Committee Meeting #13

September 13, 2017, 6:30pm – 8:30pm
East County Regional Services Center
3300 Briggs Chaney Rd, Silver Spring, MD

Participants

CAC Members (<i>X for in attendance, blank for regrets</i>)			
Fisseha Adugna	X	Ayana Lambert	
Carole Ann Barth		Peter Myo Khin	X
John Bowers		Shane Pollin	X
Brian Downie	X	Rob Richardson	X
Oladipo Famuyiwa		Julian Rosenberg	X
Kevin Gunthert		Sebastian Smoot	
Latisha Johnson	X	Joseph Tahan	X
Bernadine Karns		Dan Wilhelm	X
Matthew Koch	X	Eric Wolvovsky	X

Staff

Darcy Buckley, MCDOT
Joana Conklin, MCDOT
Dan Hibbert, MCDOT
Corey Pitts, MCDOT
Rick Kiegel, RK&K
Michael Weinberger, Foursquare ITP
Sandy Klanfer, Foursquare ITP
William Shuldiner, Foursquare ITP/MCDOT

Members of the Public

Harriet Quinn

Welcome

The meeting commenced at 6:30 pm.

Michael Weinberger, the meeting facilitator, welcomed the CAC members and thanked them for attending the meeting. He began the meeting by explaining that new staff members had joined

the BRT support team since the previous CAC meeting and invited everyone in the room to introduce themselves. After introductions, Michael informed the CAC members of updates to the CAC program plan. He described feedback from CAC members regarding the desire to spend additional time on some agenda items that had come up in previous CAC meetings. Because of this feedback, the meeting would include an interactive exercise on pedestrian, bike, and local bus access.

Fall Outreach Activities Update

Michael provided an update on the team's outreach efforts. He shared a list of events that MCDOT has attended as part of the overall Public Involvement Plan (PIP). These events have taken place throughout the US 29 corridor and include National Night Out, the Silver Spring Farmers Market, and the Takoma Park Folklife Festival. He invited CAC members to email him with suggestions for additional events to attend or community organizations to talk to. He reminded CAC members that the next CAC meeting would take place in November and it would cover the preliminary design prior to the general open houses in the second week of November.

Environmental Documentation Update

A. Overview

Michael introduced Rick Kiegel, the consultant Project Manager for the US 29 BRT project, to provide an update on the project's environmental documentation.

Rick explained that because the US 29 BRT project is partially funded through the federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant, it is subject to environmental analysis and documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). On August 9, 2017, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) determined that the US 29 BRT project meets the criteria of a Class II listed Categorical Exclusion (CE). This was a requirement of the federally funded grant and an important milestone for the progress of the project design. A copy of the environmental documentation was shared with CAC members on August 10th and is available on the website, along with the approval and the 12 supporting technical studies. The team will provide updates to CAC members on elements requiring additional follow-up as the design progresses.

B. Potential Hazardous Sites

One of the follow-up elements is hazardous materials. Rick explained that in a broad assessment of the corridor, nine sites along the corridor have been identified as areas in which there could be potential environmental hazards. The next step is to complete a Phase 1 environmental site assessment (ESA) to identify any potential hazardous materials. If MCDOT finds anything potentially harmful they will need to complete additional studies to determine what action needs to be taken.

C. Trees

Another follow-up element is trees along the corridor. Rick informed the CAC members that 94 street trees and three specimen trees were identified in station study areas. He defined street trees as the smaller trees that have been planted more recently and defined specimen trees as the larger, older trees. The number of trees affected will be reduced as the project determines the specific areas where construction will take place. Rick then described the process for replacing any trees that were affected by the project. For trees on a state highway right-of-way, there is a one-to-one replacement requirement. For trees on county properties, there is typically a three-to-one replacement requirement.

D. Stormwater Management

The final follow up element is stormwater management. Montgomery County's project team has determined a specified plan for analyzing stormwater management requirements along the corridor. Under this plan, each individual BRT station platform must have its own stormwater management mitigation process, instead of combining each platform area into a corridor level plan. More detail on treatment will be provided as the design advances.

Community Improvement Hotspot Activity

A. Introduction

Michael Weinberger introduced the Community Improvement Hotspot Activity. The Activity would take an hour and a half and it was developed based on feedback from CAC members after previous meetings. Due to the nature of this activity, the notes from tonight's CAC would not only include the written summary but also scanned copies of the CAC members' note sheets and the maps that are part of the activity. All documents are available online to ensure that all CAC member feedback was accounted for.

B. Instructions

Michael introduced Sandy Klanfer, who facilitated the activity. Sandy re-stated the goals of the activity, such as greater communication between CAC members and project staff and increased understanding of the potential challenges the on the US 29 corridor. He instructed the CAC members to divide into two groups before handing out the activity materials. Instructions were projected on a screen as a reminder. In the activity, each team was given three sets of stickers for the three separate phases of the activity. The CAC members were instructed to use the color-coded stickers to answer questions about challenges to bicycle, pedestrian or transit operations in each of the assigned areas. The team was instructed to identify up with three locations for each question. Groups were formed and the activity commenced with Michael and Sandy helping as needed.

C. Review of CAC Member Feedback

Each group worked for approximately 30 minutes on the first three questions that involved the strengths and challenges of biking in the area. Michael then invited each group to share their findings.

Bicycle Activity Phase:

1. *Where do people like to bike in the community?*

Group A: The group cited Paint Branch Park in Northwest Paint Branch as a suitable alternative to US 29. They also predicted that as Viva White Oak develops it might become a nice place for people to bike.

Group B: The group cited the trail from Paint Branch Valley Stream to Martin Luther King Jr. Park, Sligo Creek Park, and Old Columbia Pike as places where people enjoy biking.

2. *Where does biking feel unsafe?*

Group A: The group said that every road near or parallel to US 29, except for Old Columbia Pike is unsafe, and that even those with bike paths are still not very safe for bikers. They acknowledged that US 29 is considered a road on which you can legally bike but it's not very conducive to biking.

Group B: The group listed University Boulevard and Colesville Road, Randolph Road and US 29 because of the steep valley, and New Hampshire Avenue north of US 29. They noted that there is only one bike lane on Old Columbia Pike but cited community opposition as the likely reason for this. Finally, they described that there used to be a bike lane on westbound Briggs Chaney Road near New Hampshire Avenue, but the lane was removed leaving a wide shoulder that is still enjoyable to bike on.

3. Where would you like to see bikeshare stations?

Group A: The group suggested potential sites at White Oak, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for both commuting and going out to lunch, as well as Tech Road and Briggs Chaney.

Group B: The team said that they suggested networks of stations, rather than simply single stops. This network includes White Oak Shopping Center, the apartment complexes behind White Oak, the FDA, and Hillandale. Additionally, they listed the Tech Road area near Viva White Oak; the Orchard Center and the apartments to the south; and the Briggs Chaney commercial strip as areas that would also benefit from bikeshare.

Question (Q): Does Montgomery County have bikeshare plans?

Answer (A): Montgomery County's Capital Bikeshare network has continued to expand. The county sees bikeshare as a first mile, last mile support piece. The US 29 BRT project includes ten stations, but the area's ultimate network is not limited to these ten locations and a list of desired locations could be helpful to the bikeshare program for future expansion.

Comment (C): LATIP (White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan area) has 67 bikeshare stations recommended. The locations are TBD, and could be coordinated with this effort (as noted by CAC member Dan Wilhelm)

Comment (C): A way to solve the first-mile, last-mile problem would be to have more places for bike storage or locking along the main corridor so that people can then take the bus or other transit since many people don't want to take their bikes downtown or to their other destinations.

A: That's a good point, and looking at data of where people like to ride can help Montgomery County determine where to put bike storage or lock locations

Q: Will there be bike storage at the BRT Stations?

A: We are looking at locations where there may be room for bike storage. In some cases, this may mean bike racks at the station while in others it may mean partnering with adjacent property owners to provide bike racks. Additionally, there will be places for people to store their bikes on board the bus so many people may decide to take their bikes with them.

C: Electric bicycles could be helpful on the US 29 corridor because it is so hilly.

A: That is a very good point. MTA's BaltimoreLink Bikeshare Program has used electric bikes and bikes with pedal assist to expand bikeshare usage in Baltimore.

Pedestrian Activity Phase:

The activity then resumed as the groups began discussing potential strengths and challenges regarding pedestrian access in the region for 20 minutes.

1. *What are the most pleasant places to walk in your community?*

Group B: The group listed the Northwest Paint Branch Valley Park, Martin Luther King Jr. Park, Rachel Carson Park, and Sligo Creek Park as the most pleasant places to walk.

Group A: The group said that the neighborhoods with sidewalks, the library off Old Columbia Pike, the area next to Greencastle Elementary School and the park area behind the school are all places people enjoy walking.

2. *Where does walking feel unsafe?*

Group B: The group listed the Stewart Lane crossing on US 29 due to the lack of sidewalks, and the number of people trying to cross at this location and the Tech Road and US 29 intersection, despite the fact that this intersection includes a crosswalk. The group also cited US 29 between Blackburn Road and Sandy Spring Road because many people who live in the apartment buildings off Blackburn Road cross US 29 as it becomes a freeway to get to the shopping center on the other side of the road.

Group A: The team cited the Inter-County Connector (ICC) because of the bike path that was never implemented, preventing pedestrians from walking along the road. They also said that mentioned Briggs Chaney Road between Old Columbia Pike and Columbia Pike and the connector roads in the Greencastle area were unsafe for the children that often use these routes.

3. *What places would benefit from new pedestrian amenities, such as new or improved sidewalks, crosswalks, or improved lighting?*

Group B: The team suggested connecting White Oak with Viva Tech and FDA with a new pedestrian path. Additionally, the group suggested making improvements to the signals on Stewart Lane, which currently cause confusion. The group also said that when turning left onto Stewart Lane from US 29 the light is often backed up, and noted that pedestrian access improvements were needed on Route 198 between US 29 and Old Columbia Pike.

Group A: White Oak Shopping Center, the site of the new Washington Adventist Hospital, Tech Road, are all in need of improvements. Additionally, while pedestrians can walk around the Burtonsville Shopping Center, the rest of Burtonsville is very difficult to walk around.

C: A member expressed concerns about the safety of Route 198 in Burtonsville, noting that there have been numerous incidents and that people have been killed. The member asked if the BRT would make this problem worse.

A: There are existing bus operations along this corridor so the goal is to replace this service with BRT that is faster and more reliable. We are hoping to identify choke points, especially through the next section of the activity, which involve transit. But we won't be able to improve everything that is an issue in this area with the introduction of BRT. For example, Transit Signal Priority (TSP) will not be able to make crowded lanes uncongested. In this way, the tools associated with BRT are meant to improve existing service by providing more reliable service, but in this activity, we are just trying to gain as much data as possible so that MCDOT is aware of issues that are outside the scope of this project and make the BRT service the best it can be.

C: The feeder lines (to US 29) need to be adjusted to better cover the neighborhoods around US 29 because the Ride On service currently does not provide enough service to these areas. This causes people to use the park and rides rather than the feeder bus services, which in turn creates more traffic.

A: We have been hearing many comments about evening and weekend service and we are trying to work on improvements to service planning to address these issues. I think the maps show that aside from the Z lines on major roads, there are not many bus lines serving communities in this area (North US 29).

C: I feel strongly that in this area (Burtonsville), all the stakeholders, such as businesses, the government, the county, and general residents need to sit down and discuss this to come up

with a solution. It cannot be solved by BRT alone. As the planner, there must be some ability to bring everyone together to find a solution. This is the challenge.

A: As the planner, this is an issue we continue to run into regarding the scope of the US 29 BRT project and what it covers. There are going to be areas, like this, that are not under the scope but can deepen our understanding and ability to ensure the success of the BRT project. If there are opportunities for MCDOT to address these issues beyond the scope of the US 29 BRT project, we will. Also, if there are opportunities to get stakeholders together, this discussion can hopefully serve as a springboard for that.

Transit Activity Phase:

Michael then invited the groups to work on the last set of questions regarding transit service in the region. After 20 minutes, the groups presented their responses.

1. What bus stops could benefit from new amenities such as shelters or benches?

Group A: The group said that, generally, local bus service does not currently serve the neighborhoods adequately and there need to be improvements made to this service. They specifically cited the area east of US 29 that would make the most sense financially, as well as areas such as Serpentine Way that would also benefit.

Group B: This group described how they focused on areas with many different bus lines coming together, but on opposite sides of the road causing difficult transfers in which people must cross busy streets. The group specifically cited areas below the White Oak-Hillandale corridor, at Tech Road, and Four Corners.

2. What bus stops would you describe as problematic?

Group A: The group cited places that had large amounts of riders disembarking, as this led to many people needing to walk once they got off the bus, especially at peak times. The group specifically noted places like Tech Road and White Oak where there are many people getting off the bus, but cars are moving fast to make the lights along US 29. The group also described a bus stop on US 29 at Crestmoor drive that was voted one of the worst bus stops in Montgomery County.

Group B: The group mentioned stops along Castle Boulevard behind Briggs Chaney Marketplace that need better benches and shelters. The group suggested implementing electronic signage that displayed next arrivals in bus hubs such as White Oak, Briggs Chaney, and Burtonsville. The group also advocated for the rearrangement of local bus service to better feed people onto US 29 from the surrounding neighborhoods.

3. *What intersections would benefit from Transit Signal Priority (TSP)?*

Group A: The group advocated for introducing TSP at locations where BRT stations are going to be constructed. The group explained that in the White Oak area where two BRT lines will come together would be a valuable place to study the effects of TSP.

Group B: The group noted three different intersections that could benefit from TSP upgrades. These were the intersections at Sligo Creek Parkway and US 29, Fairland Road and US 29 and the Burnt Mills Shopping Center.

Next Steps

Michael announced that the next US 29 BRT North CAC meeting would take place during the week of November 6, 2017. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Community Hotspot Activity Notes

OAC N Michael

GetOnBoardBRT=US 29

BUS RAPID TRANSIT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Where do people like to bike in your community? Use your green bicycle stickers to answer this question.

1. ^{Paint Branch Park} ~~Algon Mills to M&K trail~~ Recreation Center

2. Old Columbia Pike between Stewart Lane and Randolph Rd
- alternative to ^{US} 29 -

3. ~~Bicycle only access~~ on

Northeast entrance to FDA headquarters accessing to the new river walk calls
Biotech epicenter.

Additional

Briggs Chaney could be a good place to ride. It has a wide shoulder.

Where does biking feel unsafe? Use your yellow bicycle stickers to answer this question.

1. Old Columbia Pike is too narrow. It has a bike lane but still unsafe.

Columbia Pike

2. East Randolph

3. US 29 does not have bike lanes.

New Hampshire

Near Antonsville Crossing

198

Where would you like to see bikeshare stations? Use your blue bicycle stickers to answer this question.

1. Near the FDA White Oak Campus. There is an active group of bike cyclist there. Putting a bikeshare location at the FDA campus and White Oak Shopping Center could give employees an opportunity to leave for lunch.

could help with parking.

2. Briggs Chaney Market Place

- Shopping

- apartments near the area

3. Tech Rd Park and Ride

Additional locations

- Buntinsville Crossing
- Bunker Middle School - ~~Students~~, teachers, dense neighborhood around the area
- Area near Broadbirch Drive

What are the most pleasant places to walk in your community? Use your green pedestrian stickers to answer this question.

1. Paint Branch trail to park Rec Center

2. Library off old Columbia Pike

3. All the neighborhoods in the area are generally pleasant to walk in,

walking Path behind the hospital near the Pond.

What places feel unsafe to walk? Use your yellow pedestrian stickers to answer this question.

1. Depending on the time of day Paint Branch trail to MHC can be unsafe.

- gang activity

2. Area near Briggs Chazey Marketplace has some crime

3. Burtonsville Crossing
- People crossing the street

Additional:

Old Columbia (Greencastle) - a lot of children crossing

White Oak Crossing

Tech & Rt 29

• ICC - no bike paths

What places do you think would benefit from new pedestrian amenities, such as new or improved sidewalks, crosswalks, or improved lighting? Use your blue pedestrian stickers to answer this question.

1. ~~Columbia Pike~~

The area around Columbia Pike, Greenleafly

2. White Oak crossing

- better access going into the Shopping Center

- better markings

- have to go into the median to access the walk light

3. A way to walk between FDA campus and White Oak crossing

West Broadchurch Drive, Orchard Center

What bus stops in your community are problematic? Use your yellow bus stickers to answer this question.

1. Old Columbia + Tech Road Park and Ride

2. ~~at~~ Coltsville Rd + ~~crestwood~~^{moore} dr

3. Four Corners

What bus stops in your community could benefit from amenities such as shelters or benches? Use your green bus stickers to answer this question.

1. Ride on needs to go further into neighborhoods

-Turpentine

-Briggs cherry Road

-Robey Road

2. Cedar Tree Drive area

3.

Where do people like to bike in your community? Use your green bicycle stickers to answer this question.

1. Point Branch Valley Stream & MLK Park -
lots of recreational users currently

2. Sligo Creek Park - also lots of recreational
users currently

3. Old Columbia Pike - Tech Rd to Rte 198.
Currently it is a marked bike route where riders
have been observed. Also, it is flat.

[Note: We have not observed ~~a~~ bike riders who are
commuters]

Where does biking feel unsafe? Use your yellow bicycle stickers to answer this question.

1. University Boulevard ^{and} ~~at~~ Colesville Rd. intersection.
near their intersection. Exceptionally heavy traffic.

2. E. Randolph Rd west of Rte 29
Exceptionally heavy traffic, hilly, sidewalk not
conducive to bikers

3. New Hampshire Ave north of Rte 29.
Exceptionally heavy traffic with no bike
lanes.

Where would you like to see bikeshare stations? Use your blue bicycle stickers to answer this question.

1. White Oak Shopping Center together with FDA & Hillandale
(general area)

2. Tech Rd station (general area)

3. Briggs Chaney area

Note: All areas have a mix of ~~res~~ recreational
& business riders

What are the most pleasant places to walk in your community? Use your green pedestrian stickers to answer this question.

1. ^{Branch} Paint ~~Park~~ Valley Stream Park including MLK Park

2. Rachel Carson corridor in NW Branch Park

3. Sligo ~~Creek~~ Creek Park

What places feel unsafe to walk? Use your yellow pedestrian stickers to answer this question.

1. Stewart Lane at Rte. 29 (no crosswalk)

2. Tech Rd. at Rte. 29

3. Rte. 29 north of Blackburn Rd. and south of
Sandy Spring Rd.

What places do you think would benefit from new pedestrian amenities, such as new or improved sidewalks, crosswalks, or improved lighting? Use your blue pedestrian stickers to answer this question.

1. Connect White Oak with Viva Tech including
crossing Rte. 29, and including FDA

2. Stewart Lane and Rte 29 intersection (signaling)

3. ^{Rte 198}
Spenceville Rd A between Rte 29 & Old Columbia
Pike in the Burtensville business district

What bus stops in your community are problematic? Use your yellow bus stickers to answer this question.

1. White Oak ~~and~~ - Hillandale Corridor. Problem is crossing of major streets to transfer from one bus to another.

2. Tech Road - transferring between buses requires crossing major streets

3. Four Corner Corners - Same problem

What bus stops in your community could benefit from amenities such as shelters or benches? Use your green bus stickers to answer this question.

1. Castle Blvd behind Briggs-Chaney Market Place.
Shelters & benches. Also ~~electronic~~ (timetable)
signage
2. Electronic signage at White Oak Briggs Chaney
and Burtensville hubs. Also, ~~for~~ bike facilities.
3. ~~Reconnector~~ Reconnector feeder routes to the BRT hubs

Electronic signage (timetable info)
Briggs-Chaney



Which intersections do you think would benefit from Transit Signal Priority? Use your blue bus stickers to answer this question.

1. Sligo Creek Parkway

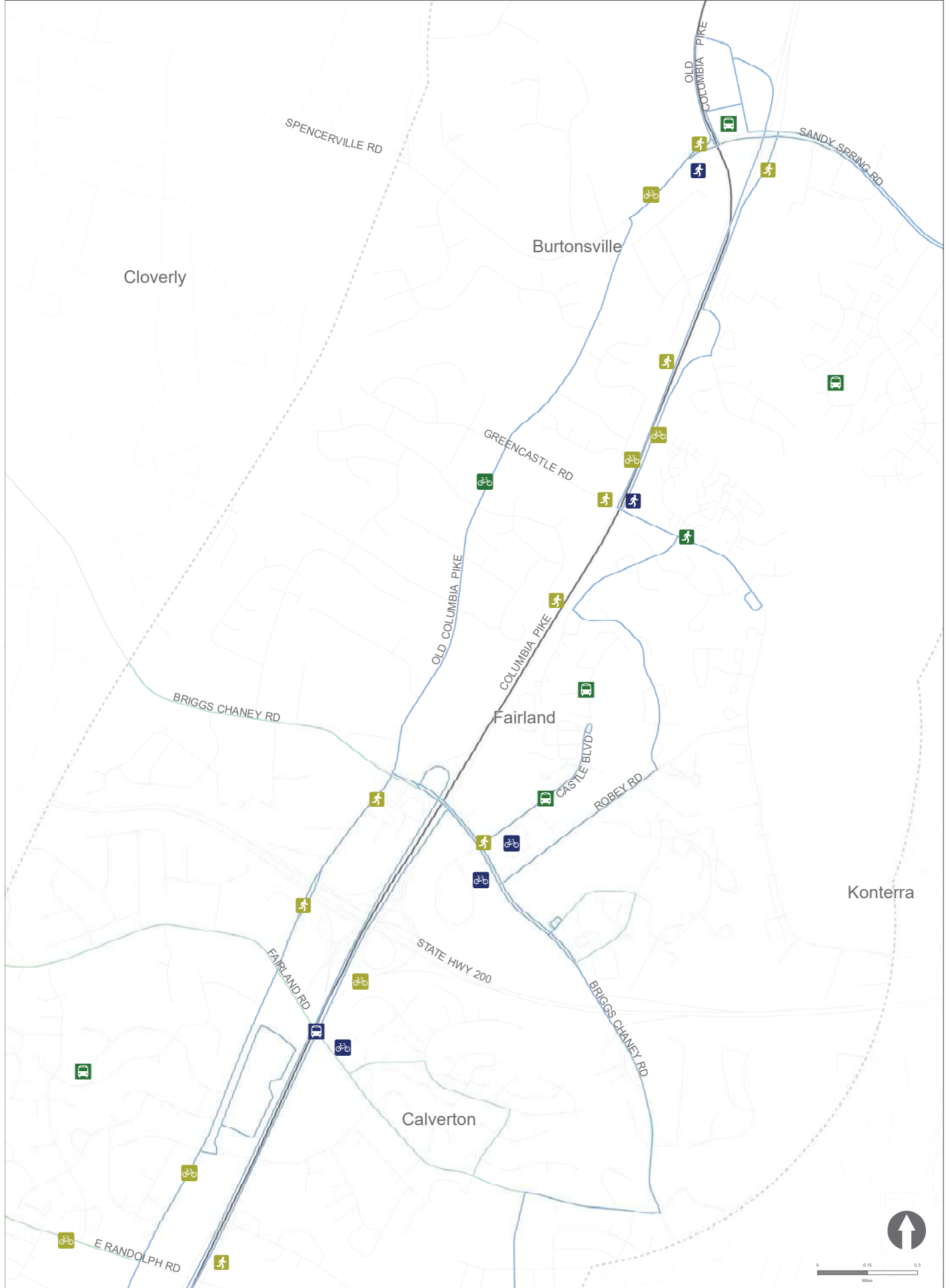
2. Fairland Rd.

3. Burnt Mills Shopping Center

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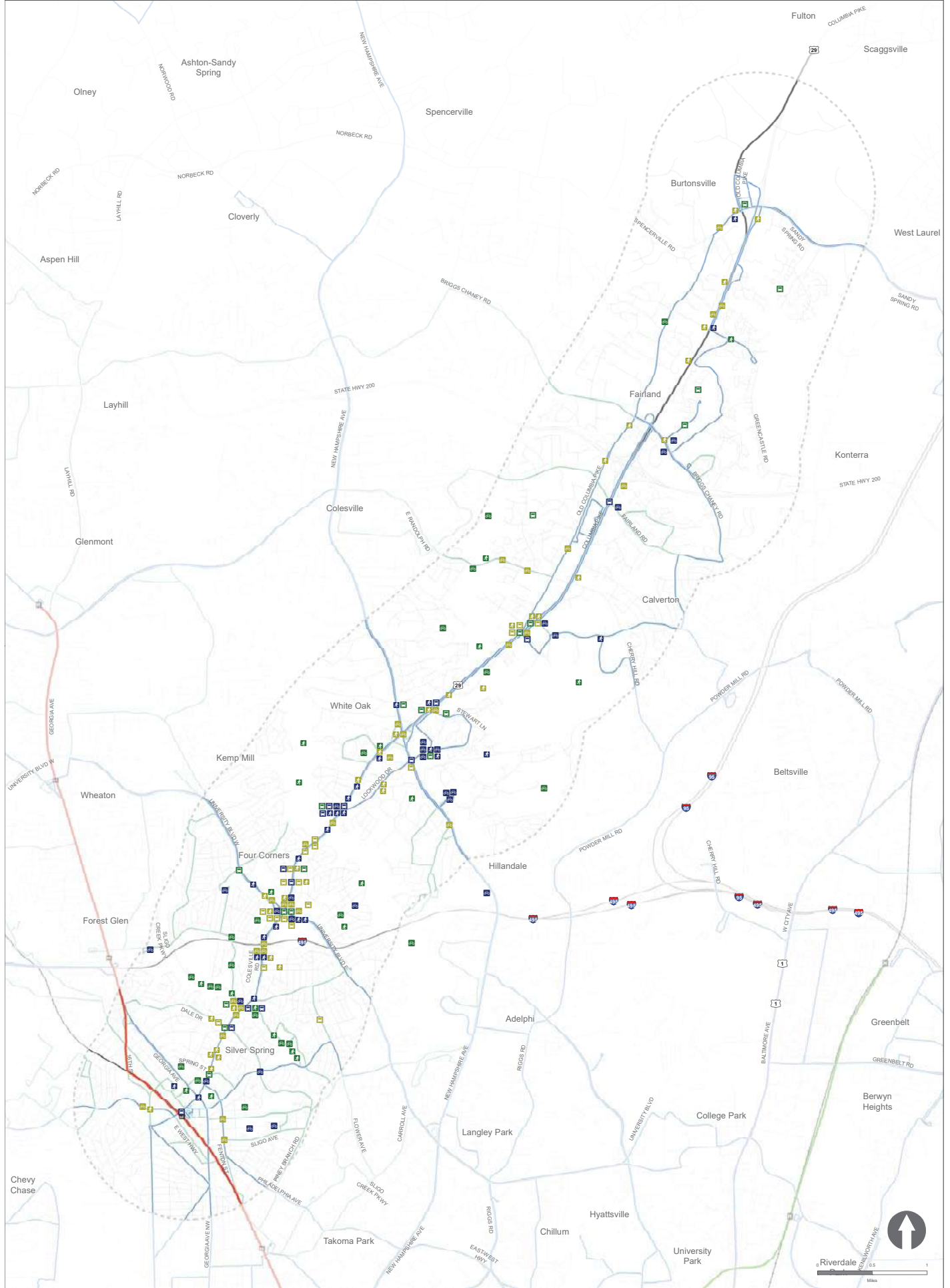


Community Hotspot Activity Maps



Community Hotspot Activity Results (Briggs Chaney -- Burtonsville)

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Bicycling Strength | Bus Strength | Pedestrian Strength | Ride On Routes | Metrorail | Bus Rapid Transit |
| Bicycling Constraint | Bus Constraint | Pedestrian Constraint | Metrobus Routes | Red Line | Study Corridor |
| Bicycling Opportunity | Bus Opportunity | Pedestrian Opportunity | | Station | |



Community Hotspot Activity Results

